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ABSTRACT

The introduction of the Multiple Ability Curriculum (MAC) and Expectation Training (ET) into the curriculum of racially integrated elementary schools appears to improve the equal status interaction between students of differing academic and social status. The goals of the MAC and ET are the following: (1) prevent classroom dominance by students of high academic standing; (2) develop higher expectations for intellectual competence on the part of poor readers; and (3) change racial stereotypes concerning intellectual competence. A 2-year controlled study was conducted involving 20 fifth and sixth grade classrooms in three racially integrated schools. Twelve classrooms received the MAC. Of those 12 classrooms, 5 also received the ET. Eight control classrooms received neither. Program effectiveness was evaluated by observing pairs of students from each classroom who played a game designed to reveal equal status behavior. Conclusions include the following: (1) reading skill has become the basis for expectations of competence over a wide range of school tasks; (2) minority students who were not perceived as good readers, but were socially influential and were seen as competent by their peers, acted on an equal status basis regardless of curriculum; (3) minority students who were not perceived as good readers, and were not socially influential, were helped by exposure to both the MAC and ET; and (4) in a classroom where whites perceived many blacks as socially influential, the status of all black low readers was improved. Statistical data are included on two graphs. (FMW)

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# STATUS EQUALIZATION PROJECT*

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Status Equalization Project

Executive Summary

This is a summary of the findings of a two year study of 20 fifth and sixth grade classrooms in three racially integrated schools. The major purpose of the study was to test several classroom treatments designed to produce "equal status interaction" betweeen children of differing academic and social status. More specifically these treatments were designed to prevent unwanted dominance of students of high academic standing; to foster the development of higher expectations for intellectual competence on the part of poorer readers; and to change the stereotypes held by different racial groups concerning each other's intellectual competence.

Extensive classroom data were collected the year before the treatments were administered in the classes of those teachers who volunteered to participate. The main measure of effectiveness of treatments was a game where a pair of children who came from the same classroom and who differed in perceived ability in reading, were asked to make decisions as a team. If a set of High and Low Readers were on the average equally likely to make suggestions and to have their ideas adopted by the pair, we describe this as "equal status behavior."

The major treatment used was the Multiple Ability Curriculum which had previously shown good success in modifying the dominance of High Readers in all-White classrooms. In the classrooms of these three schools, those children who were seen as better readers were more likely to be White. Those who were seen as poorer readers were more likely to be Black or Chicano. This is undoubtedly a product of the social class differences between the Whites and Blacks and Chicanos in these three integrated schools.

Twelve classrooms received the Multiple Ability Curriculum (MAC), a one week experience designed to teach the children that there are many different intellectual abilities people use to solve problems. The students experienced new tasks representing three new abilities in groups of mixed reading rank and racial status. Tasks were engineered so that everyone would participate and experinece some measure of success.

Of these 12 classrooms, five received <u>in addition</u>, Expectation Training, a treatment repeatedly shown to be successful in modifying the dominance of high status group members. In these classrooms, low ranking readers who were Black or Chicano became teachers of high ranking readers from their own class, on a challenging new task. Students are only allowed to play the role of teacher after they have demonstrated competence and self-confidence in their new role.

In the remaining classrooms, no treatment was administered. Classrooms were randomly assigned to treatment within each school.

## RESULTS

Perceived reading ability in these desegregated classrooms is clearly a source of general expectations for competence. Children show a high degree of agreement on where everyone ranks on reading. Furthermore, the children's rank order is similar to the teacher ranking of the students. On the behavioral criterion task which does not involve any school-related skills, we consistently found that higher ranking readers tended to dominate the lower ranking readers. This happened regardless of whether the group was all Black or had a High Reader who was White. Even after treatment, lower readers continued to be less active and influential than higher ranking readers.

Reading ability is not the only basis for social influence in these schools. Children were asked to nominate the three most and least influential classmates of their own sex. In most classrooms, social influence was only weakly associated with reading ability. This means that there are alternative bases for social influence; reading ability is one basis, but there are others as well. There are many socially powerful Black children who do not receive a high ranking on reading. In addition, in many classrooms, the Whites select Blacks as being the most socially influential. This is somewhat more characteristic of a school like Longfellow where there are 50% Blacks than Ventura where each different ethnic minority represents a small proportion of the total student body.

These social dynamics affected our ability to see the effects of the treatments. According to a questionnaire on self-evaluation of the new abilities in the MAC, lower ranking readers formed favorable evaluations on the new abilities of the curriculum. Clearly the curriculum experience worked the way it was supposed to.

On the behavioral measure, we could see the effect of the social influence of many of the Low Readers. Despite the fact that we had matched High and Low readers on their perception's of each other's influence, the influence of many of the Low Readers in the eyes of their classmates was frequently higher than the influence of the High Reader. When this happened, High and Low Readers were equally likely to be active and influential. In other words, they behaved as if they were "equal status."

When the influence of the Low Reader was lower than that of the High Reader, only the combined treatment of MAC and

Expectation Training appeared to be affective in modifying the dominance of the High Reader. Changing ability conceptions is not enough by itself; it needs to be combined with a treatment which places the powerless low status child in a position of leadership such as a teacher role.

Still another factor affecting behavior on the criterion task was the extent to which Blacks were seen as influential by Whites in the classroom. If Blacks were seen as influential and powerful by Whites, there was a general increase in the interaction of all Black Low Readers regardless of their personal reputation. This is a favorable effect which is more likely to be found in schools with a larger percentage in the student body and on the faculty and where there is a strong multicultural component in the curriculum.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. There is strong evidence that differences in r ading skill have become the basis for expectations for competence over a wide range of tasks in these schools. Unless steps are taken to modify the effects of this status order, it will be difficult to persuade those students who are expected to be incompetent to put out the effort and activity necessary for improvement.

2. There are many minority students who are not see as good readers but who are socially influential and who are seen as competent by their peers. With or without our treatment they are likely to behave on an equal status basis with better readers who are White. Social influence acts as a "natural treatment" for many children, causing them to be seen as competent by their peers, despite their lack of skill in reading.

3. There are other minority students who are neither seen as good readers nor are they socially influential. In interaction with better readers and more socially influential peers they are likely to act in a passive and incompetent manner. The Multiple Ability Curriculum combined with Expectation Training seemed to have a favorable effect on this situation.

4. A second natural treatment is present in some of these classrooms where Whites see many Blacks as socially influential. This situation tends to boost the contribution of all Black Low Readers to the task.

## SUMMARY

1. The success of the Multiple Ability Curriculum in fostering evaluations of new intellectual abilities in children who are seen as poor readers suggests that it is practical and feasible to make the curriculum for the integrated classroom a "multiple ability" experience, where different intellectual skills are defined and valued; and different children are allowed to excel in different dimensions of ability

2. Teachers should be aware of and take advantage of the favorable effects of social influence on poor readers. By using groupwork on academic tasks, (for example in science and social studies) poor readers will be motivated to participate actively and to work hard at academic tasks. They do not necessarily require any special treatment to be seen as "competent." Their peers already regard them as able.

3. Children who are neither good readers nor socially influential will require both a multiple ability approach to curriculum and some experience of classroom leadership in order to become active and engaged with their learning. We recommend the kind of groupwork defined by the teacher as multiple ability tasks which we successfully demonstrated in some of the classrooms at Longfellow following the treatments. These children should be allowed to play the role of group facilitator to enhance their social influence in the classroom.

4. In connection with groupwork, we recommend a strong individualized program in the basic skills where the poorer readers are given suitably challenging tasks, accurate reinforcement and feedback; they should not be allowed to withdraw from their work. Evaluation in these classrooms should be private and non-competitive.

Status Equalization Project

Report to Cooperating Schools

This is a final report from the Stanford School of Education Status Equalization Project to those schools graciously cooperating with us during our two year study. The faculty at these schools has shown understanding and great patience in the difficult task of working with a large group of researchers who required them to open their classrooms to systematic observation and to the Multiple Ability Curriculum team. Faculty members have filled out questionnaires, arranged for children to participate in the many procedures and measurements taken during the two year project. Some faculty volunteered to work closely with the Stanford Support Group in producing small group techniques to the classroom and in adapting their curriculum to the use of small groups. For all this we are very grateful.

To sum up all that we have learned in a short report is not possible. The extensive data that have been collected will continue to be studied over the next year; it will yield further knowledge of use to the teachers of integrated schools. What have we learned from observations and experimentation thus far? Probably, the most interesting thing we have learned is that the dynamics of the multiracial classroom are far more complicated than what is now described in writing on the integrated school. By using behavioral measures of interracial interaction as the key measure, we have been able to see how the social influence among the students as well as academic status simultaneously affect classroom interaction. We have also been able to see how the children are affected by the social power of their own racial group in the classroom environment. But I am getting ahead of my story.

Goals of the Project

The major purpose of the study was to test several classroom treatments designed to produce "equal status interaction" between children of differing academic and social status. More specifically, these treatments were designed to prevent unwanted dominance of students of high academic standing; to foster the development of higher expectations for intellectual competence on the part of poorer readers; and to change the stereotypes held by different racial groups concerning each other's intellectual competence.

In classrooms such as yours where there are children from very different socio-economic and racial backgrounds, the results is great heterogeneity in academic skills as well as social background. Our previous research had documented self-fulfilling prophecies whereby children who are White or children who are seen as better readers tend to dominate others in group tasks where there is no rational reason to expect that they should be the most active and influential. If some students are generally expected to be incompetent, then it is difficult for the teacher to produce effort and active learning. These are the children the teacher often calls the "low self concept student." We think these children act passive and incompetent, not because they are naturally that way, but because their peers have such low expectations of their competence.

Over the past ten years of research on this problem, we have developed two treatments designed to modify these expectations for competence based on social and academic status. One of the treatments, Expection Training, has the low status student become the teacher of the high status student on a new and challenging task. The other treatment, the Multiple Ability Curriculum, is a set of group tasks designed to help the students see that many different abilities are involved in intellectual problem solving and

that different students are superior at different abilities. The "better" readers are not consistently better at these new abilities than those seen as poorer readers. This treatment has demonstrated success in preventing dominance by better readers in all White classrooms, where there are sharp differences in social class among the children. Groups who have experienced either of the treatments are much less likely to exhibit dominance of the high status children interaction on new tasks than untreated groups.

The purpose of this particular study was to apply these treatments to ongoing desegregated classrooms to see if we could produce equal status interaction by modifying the tendency of students who are better readers to dominate group interaction. In equal status interaction, there is no systematic tendency for children of particular social or academic status to be more active and influential. Activity and influence are determined by interest and motivation and by the interaction of group members as it develops over time.

Equal status interaction is of particular importance to the desegregated setting for several reasons:

1. If classroom interaction reflects White or Anglo dominance, the desegregated setting will not decrease stereotypical beliefs concerning the competence of minority groups in the society. Repetition of the status order of the outside society is not what educators have in mind for the integrated school.

2. If some minority students have low general expectations for competence in the integrated classroom, it will be very difficult to produce improvement in basic skills areas. The teacher will have to work against a strong tendency for the student to feel that he or she will be unsuccessful no matter how hard the teacher works to produce improvement.

Design of Project

In the first year of the project (school year 1976-77) we collected data to describe the social structure of the classrooms which were to be included

in the study. We gave the children questionnaires; you answered questionnaires on methods of classroom instruction; and observers came in to observe interaction on mixed status groups as they played a game called Shoot-the-Moon in front of TV cameras. We did this to see if there were effects of reading status on a task which did not require reading.

In the fall of 1977, we randomly assigned classrooms of participating teachers to three conditions: Multiple Ability Curriculum (MAC); Multiple Ability plus Expectation Training; and Control.

Figure I

Assignment of Classroom and Treatment Conditions for 3 Schools

| Schools | Treatment | 5th & 6th Grade Classrooms | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wordsworth | MAC | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | MAC + ET | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | Control | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| II | MAC | | 1 | 2 | | |
| | MAC + ET | | 1 | | | |
| | Control | | 1 | | | |
| III | MAC | | 1 | | | |
| | MAC + ET | | | | | |
| | Control | | 1 | 2 | | |

MAC: Multiple Ability Curriculum
ET: Expectation Training

For those classrooms receiving the MAC, an interracial team came into the classroom an hour a day for a week with films and group tasks. Each day the children were recomposed into heterogenous groups, mixed as to reading status,

sex, and race. After the introduction of each of three abilities by a short film which showed how people use this ability to solve important problems, the small groups experienced a series of highly interesting tasks representing the different abilities. There was an adult from the team with each group so as to insure that students worked according to the rules, so that no student was confused and therefore incompetent, and so that all children learned that it was desirable for everyone to participate and what the group would gain from their cooperation. Each of these tasks was engineered so that no one person could dominate the group and be seen as clearly the most competent and influential. None of these tasks made conventional academic skills a prerequisite to success.

In those classrooms receiving Expectation Training, we brought in a second interracial staff. Certain children were selected on the basis of the sociometric questionnaire to be trained as teachers. These were students seen as poor readers who were mostly from minority ethnic and racial groups. Working closely with our staff, they became expert on how to assemble and take apart a complex Chinese puzzle; they also learned how to teach this task to someone else. We took as much time as was necessary for each child to become completely expert and self-confident before we allowed them to teach. Each student "teacher" then taught the puzzle to a student from their class who was perceived as a much better reader. This successful teaching performance was videotaped and played back to both children. The low status student could see for him/herself how competent and self-assured they were in the teaching role.

Control classrooms received none of these experiences.

Before describing the results, it is important to remember that the activities carried out by the project staff were only designed to produce

equal status interaction in the short run. Unless classrooms provide activities and evaluations which allow poor readers to see themselves as having other important abilities, the status problems would only reoccur after we left the classroom. The MAC should be seen as a model of long-term changes in the classroom. It illustrates the way children behave in groups when new abilities are identified and everyone is given a chance to participate and succeed.

Because we see the need for long-term change from classrooms as they are presently run, in the spring of 1978 the Stanford Support Group worked with some of the teachers at Longfellow. These volunteer teachers worked with our staff in developing applications of basic principles to everyday teaching activities. Teachers and Stanford staff focused on training children for small group participation of tasks where new abilities were defined. At the Ventura School, the staff has continued to develop this approach, particularly as applied to Social Studies.

## RESULTS

### Your Classroom and the School Integration Literature

In the first year of the study we realized that the three schools were not typical of the integrated schools described in the educational literature. For example, racial composition of your schools is balanced between racial and ethnic minorities and children of majority-White background. This composition is relatively rare in studies of desegregation; more typical is a handful of minority students bussed into a predominatly White setting.

The literature reports that there is often a resegregation inside the desegregated school through ability grouping and tracking of whole classes.

Thus, there is very little opportunity for social interaction between the racial groups. This is clearly not the case for your schools where almost every classroom is thoroughly mixed as to racial composition and seating patterns.

Some studies have reported that teachers spend more time with Anglos for whom they have higher academic expectations than with minority students. The studies we conducted in your classrooms in the first year showed no such pattern. On the whole, we observed the Black children receiving more teacher attention than Whites; also they reported receiving more attention on their questionnaires.

Lastly, the educational literature stressed the importance of a multicultural component in the curriculum of the desegregated school. Studies show that this suggestion is not often implemented although it is felt to be an essential step so that Black, Chicano and Asian children will feel that their cultural heritage is seen as important and worthwhile by others. All three of the schools in the study make vigorous efforts to include this multicultural component in several areas of the curriculum.

There is very little known about schools like yours. Previous scholars have failed to describe the dynamics of the multiracial classroom where children of different backgrounds work in close conjunction with each other in a setting which legitimates the culture of the minority group. That is one of the main reasons we gathered as much data as we did, including the questionnaire on social climate and interracial relations before we even tried to intervene. We wanted to be able to understand interracial relations and the way they affected the operation of reading status in each classroom.

Dominance of high readers. In the spring of 1977, we composed four person groups of two High and two Low Readers, from the sixth grade classrooms. These groups played the criterion game task of Shoot-the-Moon. Scoring the group interaction on the tapes reveal strong patterns of dominance of the High Readers in two of the three schools. This occurred regardless of racial composition of the groups. Even when the group was all-Black, the High Readers were more active and influential than the Low Readers. In the third school, Ventura, the lack of status effect turned out to be an artifact--we had combined children from different classrooms who were of the same age, but it turned out that they didn't know each other's reading skills. Subsequent studies of the non-graded classrooms at Ventura reveal that reading status is very powerful in producing behavior, reading status is more important than age difference in the same classroom.

Fall and Spring Sociometric Study, 1977-78

In the fall and spring of the 1977-78 school year we administered a sociometric questionnaire to the children in participating classrooms. They were asked to rank order all of the students of their own sex on how good each one was in reading. Each child was given a list of classmates' names for this purpose.

This question was the basis for assigning children to groups in the Multiple Abilities Curriculum. Groups were deliberately composed of students who received high and low rankings on reading from their classmates. We also used these rankings to assign children to pairs playing Shoot-the-Moon.

The data from the reading rank question are important in their own right. Children showed a high level of agreement on the rank order on reading, even in the fall when they had not been together very long. In other words, students tend to agree with each other on where everyone stands,

including their own self-ranking. There was variation in the degree of agreement between boys and girls inside many classrooms and considerable variation from one classroom to another. Overall, the level of agreement in the spring is greater than that in the fall. In the spring we asked for a teacher ranking of the names and found a high correlation between teachers and students on this question. Overall, more of the lower-ranked readers were Black or Chicano than higher ranked readers. However, in some classrooms, this was not the case; in some classrooms in Longfellow the highest ranking readers are Black.

What does this mean? It means that there is a clear and consistent basis, starting early in the school year, for children to form a true status order based on reading rank. We cannot tell from these results whether student rank ordering is a reflection of the teacher's evaluation of reading skills which has become public knowledge or whether the dramatic difference in reading level within each classroom makes differences in reading skill obvious to fellow classmates. The fact that some classrooms show such a high level of agreement in the fall suggests that one of the following things is taking place, (1) many children know each other's reading status from previous years; (2) differences in reading skill are so great that children can make this judgement almost immediately; or (3) children are initially using race or ethnic group as a basis for estimating reading rank. Regardless of which of these interpretations is true, formation of such a strong concensual ranking makes it very difficult for teachers to avoid the development of self-fulfilling prophecies based on reading rank in their classrooms. Strong and deliberate steps to modify these effects must be taken.

A question of social power. The sociometric questionnaire also asked the children to list the three persons of their own sex who were most able

to get them to do things. This is a widely used measure of social power in school children. We computed a score for each student, which we call Attributed Social Power, taking into account the number of times each person was chosen as most influential and the number of times he/she was chosen as least influential.

What is the relationship of reading status to social power? In most classrooms which have been studied there is a strong correlation between academic standing and social influence, undoubtedly because academic success is a major source of prestige and influence in the classroom. However, in your classrooms this is frequently not the case. In your classrooms, there is some tendency for the better readers to be more socially influential but the relationship is not at all strong. Out of 20 classrooms where we examined this relationship separately for boys and girls there were only five cases where there was a statistically significant association between social power and reading rank (out of 40 cases examined). In two cases it was actually the case that there was a significant negative relationship which means that those who had higher reading rank were <u>especially unlikely</u> to be socially influential.

Except in those two cases where the relationship was a negative one, these results mean that reading rank is supplemented with some alternative basis for the development of social influence. There are very important alternative sources of influence and prestige among the children which are unrelated to reading skills. This should not be taken to mean that academic success is unimportant. Far from it--we would not be seeing the dominance of the High Readers in the game situation, if the children did not see reading as a basis for prestige and power. But there are evidently alternative sources of power which the children have evolved through their interaction with one another in the schoolroom and probably in the yard.

Because we wanted to understand the specifically racial dynamics in these situations we calculated the percent of White choices on the influence question which went to Black students for each sex group in each classroom. We called this the Black Power Index. Sometimes this proportion was the same as the proportion of Black students in the group. Sometimes it was much less and sometimes it was much higher. For example, in two of the four classrooms at Grattan and in two of the three at Ventura, and in two of the 13 at Longfellow, the Black male students were twice as influential as would be expected by their numbers among the boys. When we average this figure for each school, we can see that for the girls, the Black Power Index is much more closely related to the number of Black girls in the classroom. In Longfellow the average percent of all female White choices going to Blacks is 53%. In grattan it is 19% and in Ventura it is 25%. There is not nearly so close a relationship between the sheer numbers of Blacks and their social power for boys. The average percent of Blacks chosen in Longfellow is 48%. It is 60% in Grattan and 29% in Ventura. No doubt athletic ability and physical prowess become important alternative bases of prestige among the boys to a greater extent than among the girls. Some of the Black male students in Grattan are especially powerful socially, quite beyond their representation in the population.

We shall see below, how the social influence of the Blacks over the Whites comes to affect the behavior of all the Black children. From a teacher's point of view, this is a dimension of informal relationships among the children, which she/he may be quite unaware of. It differs by classroom and for the boys and girls within each classroom. It is a hidden dynamic growing out of the fact that children are very much aware of who is influential and of the racial background of generally influential children.

Response to the Multiple Ability Curriculum

The Stanford teaching team reported enthusiastic response from the children to the curriculum. They appeared to enjoy themselves thoroughly. Teachers were interviewed about their observations and evaluations. Selected excerpts are given below.

> From the standpoint of a classroom teacher, your respective groups of students were well mixed, that is the high ability and low-achievers were put together. I think that the mixed ability integrated small group is interesting and the way you organized them.
>
> The games were intrinsically interesting to every child. I don't know how well the children got those principles, but I like the way you were trying to get them across--cooperation, taking turns,--and not relying on one child to mastermind the whole situation.
>
> One of the things I have noticed is you make sure that the kids who in some way or another, you perceive as not being the high achiever--you were able to pull them in. I remember at one time when some reading was being done, and I noticed that the readers were the kids who were not the strong readers, and that was very good. Arniz, for instance, has been totally animated about your coming in; it just brightens him up. He really looked forward to it, and this was true for a lot of kids. Another one is Greer, who needs a lot of learning assistance--he is really into it. So the kids have a terrific feeling about the whole thing.
>
> I had a discussion with the kids when you left yesterday. One of the questions I asked is this: I see you were really enjoying the games: What is it that happens to you that makes all these interesting to you? And I gathered from several of the kids say, "They (the staff) showed us that we were thinking when we didn't even know we were thinking."
>
> I have six behavior problems that I thought were in varying degrees able to handle the situation very well. It is encouraging to see this happening because it is saying to me that in a certain given situation, you can involve the children in activities, and be able to keep the less positive behavior from surfacing--Even among some of my negative behaving children, the activity itself was not reinforcing their negative habits--their hasseling, their teasing, their aggressiveness.

If the MAC works properly, the experiences should result in students forming evaluations of their skills on the new abilities which vary between satisfactory and superior. Unlike normal school activities, these tasks were engineered so that, with the presence of a supportive adult, each child should have a feeling of reasonable success across tasks representing each ability. However, there is room for a feeling of excellence. Because we selected abilities which are quite unrelated to basic skills, many of the students who are ordinarily poor performers in the classroom found that they were unusually good at some of the new tasks.

If the curriculum is successful, we should produce just as many highly successful experiences for the low ranking readers as for the high ranking readers. If the high ranking readers develop higher evaluations of their abilities on the new tasks than the low ranking readers, we defeated our purpose. Therefore we gave the children a questionnaire just after they completed the curriculum. We asked them to rank themselves on the three new abilities of the curriculum in comparison to their classmates.

We analyzed these data by comparing the average reading rank given to each child by his/her classmates with self-evaluation on the three new abilities. In none of the 12 classrooms receiving the curriculum did we find that higher ranking readers consistently ranked themselves higher on the three new abilities. In three classrooms this happened for only one of the abilities, but not the other two.

If we just look at the number of children ranking themselves "Below Average" on any ability, we see that very few felt this way. Out of 541 students, only 16 ever ranked themselves "Below Average." One hundred and fifty-six ranked themselves "Above Average" and the remainder called themselves "Average."

These results tell us that the MAC worked as intended, forming evaluations on new abilities which should then be available to modify the effects of low expectations of competence based on reading or race.

Measurement of Equal Status Interaction

The main measure of the effects of the treatments was behavior of a pair of classmates as they made decisions on the game of Shoot-the-Moon. This board game requires the children to make a series of decisions as a team as to which way they are going to proceed on the game board. After they make the decision, the Host Experimenter rolls a die which determines how many squares they advance on the path they have selected. The idea of the game is to reach the moon in 14 turns or less, gaining as many points as possible. Points are gained or lost according to which square the playing piece lands.

We composed pairs from classrooms from each of the three conditions in the following way: Each pair was of the same sex; Each pair was made up of children who saw each other as different in reading ability--there was a Low Reader who saw the other child as a better reader. There was a High Reader who saw the other child as less skilled. They had to see each other as at least three ranks apart to qualify.

Most of the pairs were composed of a High White Reader and a Low Black or Brown Reader. We also ran some all-Black pairs who were High and Low on Reading.

We did not make a pair if the children chose each other as one of their three best friends in the class.

Lastly, we matched on the question on social influence. Only children who chose each other as highly influential, least influential, or who did not name each other on the question were paired. We were trying to match on social power so we could see the effects of academic status more clearly.

Selected children were taken out of the classroom to play the game in front of the video cameras. We took the tapes back to Stanford and scored them on a number of measures: Which child made the suggestion adopted by the team for each turn? This was a measure of influence. How many unique suggestions on the task did each child make? This was a measure of activity which is highly related to successful influence. If, for all the pairs in a given condition, the High Reader is, on the average more influential and active than the Low Reader, we describe the results as showing dominance of the High Status member. If, on the average, the High and Low Readers are about equal in activity and influence we call it equal status behavior.

The data from the game task proved extraordinarily difficult to analyze. We had chosen to play the game with pairs of children instead of the four-person groups always used in the past. This was done in the hope there would be enough pairs to estimate what had happened in each classroom. As it turned out, moving to pairs made the behavior unusually susceptible to the effects of the informal social relations among the children in each classroom. These effects worked in contradictory ways, making it impossible to do anything but estimate the major factors in the data which were working across classrooms and schools. After many months of study and elaborate statistical analysis we have come to some very interesting conclusions.

1. Even after treatment, there are strong effects of difference in reading status on behavior on the game. Those children who were higher ranked readers made more unique suggestions and were more influential in deciding which way the pair was to proceed on the game board. This effect is visible regardless of treatment, race or sex.

2. There is a powerful force working against the tendency of high readers to dominate low readers. This force stems from the independent effect of being a person whom classmates see as influential. As we explained above,

in your classrooms, there is often a basis (or bases)for social influence which is quite independent of reading status. This alternative way to become influential produced many Black or Brown Low Readers who were seen as very influential by many of their classmates. Despite the fact that we carefully matched each pair on how they saw each other on the social influence measure, in many cases the Low Reader was seen as highly influential by others in the class while the High Reader was seen as less influential by the class.

Out of 97 pairs of children where there were good tapes scored for all the relevant influence measures, 48 turned out to have the Low Reader having the same or higher attributed power than the High Reader.

Looking at the behavior of all the pairs where this was the case, they show, on the average, perfectly equal status behavior. This means that when the Low Reader happens to be a person with generally high influence in the class, the effect of reading status is modified and the result is perfectly equal status behavior.

From the point of view of a teacher, this is very significant. It means that if you should want to use a group task such as group discussion in social studies, for example, and take the simple precaution of allowing the children to read to each other, (so as not to make reading a prerequisite of success), you need not worry about these relative influential children even though they are poor readers. They will undoubtedly plunge into the interaction with enthusiasm, contributing their point of view, willing to bring in new and different ideas, and more than willing to argue for their position.

3. The social influence factor just described which did so much to boost the activity and influence of the Low Reader on the Shoot-the-Moon game, actually made it very difficult to examine the effects of the MAC and

Expectation Training. For all those pairs where the social influence of the Low Reader was high and resulted in equal status behavior, there was no problem of dominance by better readers; one could not see the effects of treatment. Therefore we had to restrict our examination to those pairs where the power of the Low Reader was lower than that of the High Reader. It is important to remember that we are looking at those children in your classroom who are less influential as well as poorer readers in interaction with children who are better readers and more influential.

Here we can detect something about the effects of treatment. Evidently, the Multiple Ability Curriculum, is not sufficiently strong by itself, to modify High Reader dominance, when the Low Reader is a minority person who plays a relatively uninfluential role in the classroom. This suggests that it is important to do something about the lack of social power this student has in the classroom before he/she will behave in an active and assertive manner--even if they are seen and see themselves as relatively competent.

Expectation Training is a treatment which puts the low status person in a powerful role of teacher of the high status person. When we combine Expectation Training with the MAC, we move the pairs toward equal status behavior.

These results are summarized in the histogram on page 18. The pairs are divided according to the Attributed Power of the Low Reader as compared to the High Reader. Histogram A represents those pairs where the Low Reader is lower in Attributed Power than the High Reader. Histogram B represents those pairs where the Low Reader <u>is more</u> powerful or has the same power as the High Reader. The height of the bar for each condition represents the

Histogram

Table A

Attributed Power of Low Reader is Less than Attributed Power of High Reader

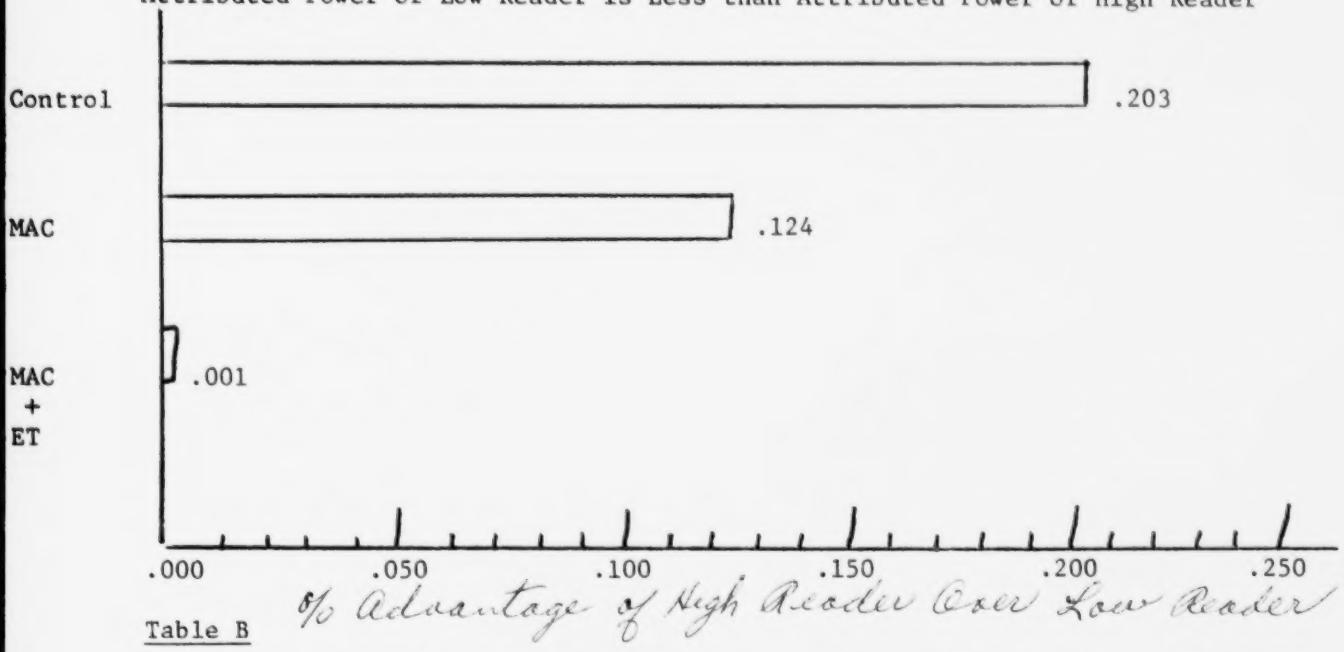
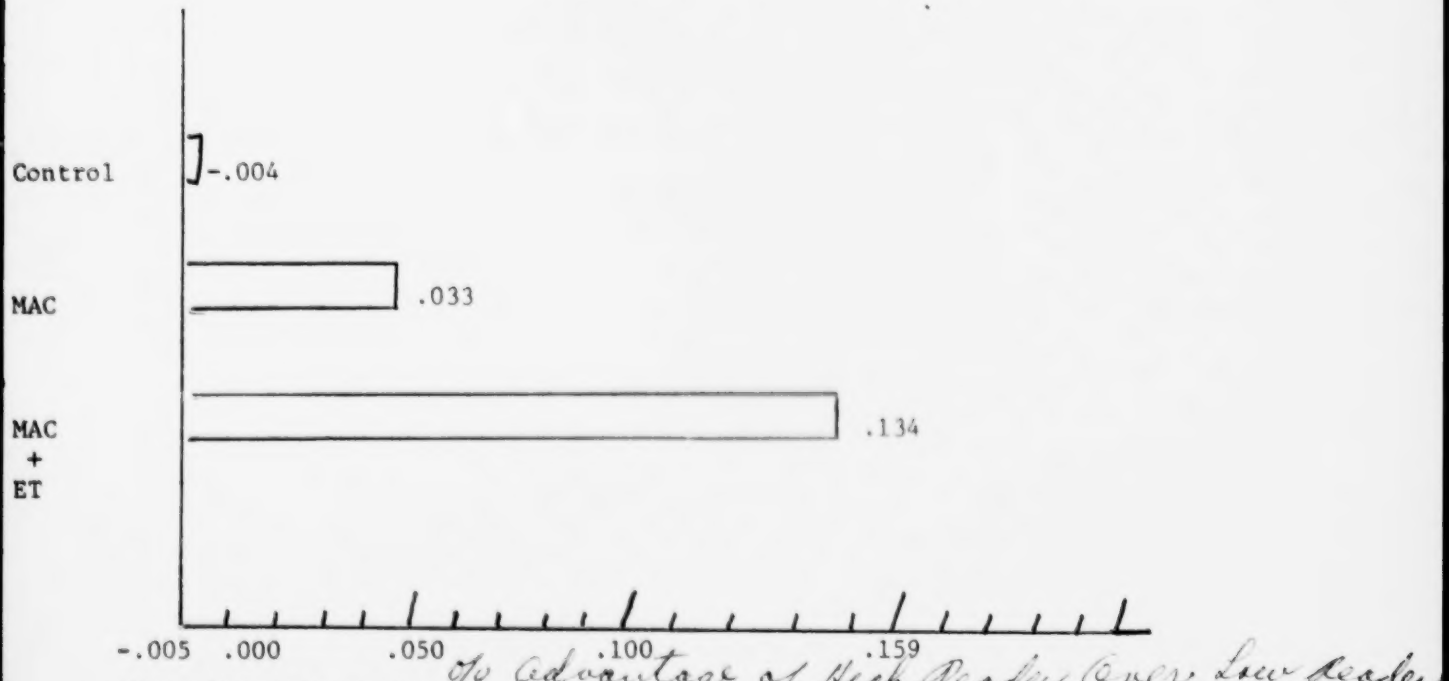



Table B

Attributed Power of Low Reader is Equal to or Greater Than Attributed Power of High Reader




MAC = Multiple Ability Curriculum
ET = Expectation Training

average proportion made by the Low Reader. If this average is 0%, then this is equal status behavior. If the average is 20% as in the case of untreated pairs with Low Power Low Readers, then the High Reader is on the average, 20% more active on the task than the Low Reader. Examination of this histogram shows that when MAC and Expectation Training were combined, the result was an average figure of 0%--or equal status behavior.

We can see the effect of Expectation Training plus the MAC in another way. After Shoot-the-Moon the children filled out a questionnaire. We asked them to select who was the "leader" of the pair. When the Low Reader had less Attributed Power than the High Reader, and the pairs received no treatment, only 35% of the Low Readers were picked as Leader. When this type of pair received MAC only, 41% of the Low Readers were picked as Leader. In contrast, when the pairs received MAC and Expectation Training, 56% were picked as Leader. This includes some Low Readers who were often seen as very uninfluential in the class. Here are the beneficial effects of putting such children into a role as teacher, a powerful and influential position. It cannot be over-emphasized that these children were very carefully prepared and were not allowed to play the teacher role until they had demonstrated complete competence at the task and in teaching it.

4. In addition to the effects of reading, status, general social influence, and treatment, there is one more classroom factor which affected the behavior of the children on the game. As described above, your classrooms varied considerably on the Black Power Index--the extent to which White students chose Blacks as influential. In those classrooms where Blacks were seen as powerful by Whites, the Black Low Readers were more likely to make unique suggestions on the game. This effect stands out even when the Low Reader's personal influence is taken into account. In other words, if I am

a Black Low Reader and my people are seen as influential by the Whites in the classroom, I am more likely to speak up and make suggestions when I am interacting with a White High Reader than if people like myself are seen as uninfluential.

You will recall that, in the case of girls, this Black Power Index is a partial reflection of the number of Blacks in the classroom. Thus, in those classrooms such as Ventura where there are relatively few of any single minority group, the powerlessness of the minority group comes to affect interpersonal behavior of all Black girls as they interact with Whites who are seen as better readers.

Behavior in small group discussion. Late in the spring of 1978, we ran some small group discussions in selected classrooms at Longfellow. Our purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of the small group techniques the Stanford Support Group had been developing in conjunction with volunteer teachers at the school. We composed groups mixed as to reading rank, race, and sex. In each five-person group, one child, a low ranking reader was chosen to play the role of facilitator. We brought in a chart showing the expected behaviors of this facilitator whose job it was to see that everyone particapted and give reasons for their ideas.

Two members of the staff role-played a moral dilemma of high interest and concern to fifth and sixth graders. Each group was asked to discuss and come to a conclusion as to what was the best solution to the dilemma. Some of the groups in each classroom were scored for interaction by staff observers which the group discussed.

Results showed that the use of the facilitator technique produced equal status interaction even in classrooms where the Support Group had not been working. We had two important advantages in these groups: We used a

facilitator who made sure that everyone spoke; and we had the natural advantage of many socially powerful children who are not highly ranked in academics, but who will be very active in group discussion. We demonstrated that groupwork at Longfellow can be an import technique to increase student involvement in academic work. Furthermore, facilitators were able to play their role with little or no training as long as this role was made perfectly clear and legitimate to everyone in the group. Children who are uninfluential and poorer readers should be encouraged to play clearly defined roles of this kind. One should not assume that only children who are the best performers in academics and/or who are ordinarily very good citizens in the classroom are capable of playing such official roles.

## IMPLICATIONS

As you know, bringing together children from very different social class backgrounds has produced classrooms with a wide range of achievement levels on conventional academic skills. These differences have become "public knowledge," knowledge on which students and teachers agree. This would not be important for the classroom teacher if it were not the case that these judgements on skill in reading become the basis for expected competence on tasks which do not involve reading or other school-related skills--tasks such as the game of Shoot-the-Moon. This is the significance of the finding that higher ranked readers tend to dominate lower ranked readers on Shoot-the-Moon, regardless of treatment, and regardless of the operation of powerful social factors which tend to boost the influence of Low Readers in many of your classrooms.

This experimental finding means that if you introduce new tasks to the Low Readers, they are likely to assume that they will do poorly on the new task and will receive another negative evaluation. These general expectations

for competence can be at the base of what are usually seen as "behavior problems" in which low performers continually slip out of work and are found wandering around the classroom, talking to others or quietly disengaged from their tasks.

The data analysis of Shoot-the-Moon shows the low rates of activity and influence of poor readers who have low Attributed Power. This means that if you try to introduce groupwork without a multiple ability setting or a special facilitator role, such as we use, those children who are Low Readers and who are also uninfluential in the class will act in a passive and incompetent way, even though they may be very interested in the task.

Because of the great potential for differences in reading skill to become the basis for a set of self-fulfilling prophecies, it is <u>essential to foster alternative conceptions of ability</u> in the classroom. This does not mean that you should pay any less attention to basic skills than you presently do. There is nothing educationally wrong with students making realistic assessments of self and others on reading skills or math skills. What you want to avoid is having this assessment taken as an index of general intellectual ability instead of a specific evaluation of skill. If reading is taken as a general index of intelligence, it becomes difficult to bring about changes in expectations for competence on the part of your weakest students.

The Multiple Ability Curriculum was able to foster alternative conceptions of ability, as measured by the children's self-evaluation following the activities. There are a number of features of this curriculum which account for its success. You can use these same techniques in designing small group tasks for your own classroom in connection with any subject area.

We set up the tasks to make sure that every child had a chance to participate, by enforcing the rule of taking turns. Some of the tasks were designed so that each person had a part of the action; the group could not accomplish its goal without everyone doing their part. None of the tasks made reading, writing, or computation a prerequisite for success.

Most important, the tasks were clearly defined as examples of alternative abilities--in this case, Intuitive Thinking, Reasoning or Visual Thinking. You can do the same by clearly defining the various intellectual skills you see involved in any group task you set for the students. You can actually tell them that you do not expect one person to be good at all these abilities, but that in all probability, different children will be good at different abilities.

Finally, we stressed certain norms for working in groups--giving everyone a chance to participate, listening to each other, gaining the benefits of everyone's contribution. Once these norms for behavior are learned, the children will help to enforce them with each other in more loosely structured discussion groups.

In many of your classrooms, we believe that the children themselves have developed alternative conceptions of what it means to be "smart." What seems to be at work in some of your classrooms is an excellent "natural" treatment for the problem of low expectations of competence on the part of poor readers. Many Black children who are ranked as poor readers are highly influential. On the Shoot-the-Moon game they were judged as having better ideas--they were not just seen as powerful in the play yard--they were seen as able in making decisions. This peer judgement is probably based on the way they interact with their peers, organizing them into games and solving peer problems. Teachers who have such socially powerful children in their classrooms often perceive them

as a threat to discipline; they are therefore hesitant to allow relatively free interaction such as we advocate for small groups. Actually, these children are the ideal candidates for small groupwork on academic topics. It should be relatively easy to help them in becoming excited about learning. On the Shoot-the-Moon task we saw them plunge in and behave on an equal-status basis with better readers. We observed many of these children become very active in the groupwork sponsored by the Stanford Support Group at Longfellow.

If you set up groupwork, even on highly academic topics, they will participate and say what they think; they will be willing to argue and try to influence the group discussion. This will be true even without the device of enforced turn-taking or the use of a group facilitator. As long as you do not shut them out by making reading and writing a prerequisite for success on the task, they will willingly use these skills in the group setting. With improved engagement in academic group tasks and use of reading and writing with the support of peers in the group, you will hopefully improve effort and attention to individual work on basic skills.

What about the children who are poor readers and who have very little influence over classmates? These children probably need more than a multiple ability experience. Without some improvement in their social standing in the peer group, it will be difficult for them to speak up and argue in a persuasive way with their peers. They probably need the experience of leadership such as the facilitator role. These are typically the last children to be given such opportunities. If they are to succeed in the role and not face challenges from their peers, it is important for the teacher to lay out exactly what they are to do in a facilitator role so they are clear and their classmates are clear about what they are supposed to do.

You may wonder why we urge you to learn about the informal power relationships in the classroom. We would argue that powerlessness on the part of

children who are also poor in academic skills, makes the teacher's job far more difficult. It becomes far more difficult to alter expectations for incompetence when one is dealing with a "powerless" child than when one is dealing with a child whom the peers regard as "able" although not acdemically skilled. Fortunately, for the teacher's sake, these informal rankings of social influence among school children are changeable. We found that many children who were seen as quite powerless in the fall, had changed their status markedly by spring. This would suggest that it is quite possible to change the standing of especially powerless children by increasing their prestige and influence through their official roles in the classroom.

Finally, we would like to leave you with a few thoughts concerning the findings on Black Power. You will recall that on the whole, Whites saw a larger proportion of Black students as influential at Longfellow. We are not the only team to find that in schools such as Longfellow where there are strong Black staff members of a goodly proportion, where there is a vigorous element of Black culture accepted as a legitimate part of the curriculum and where there is a balance in racial composition between Blacks and Whites--that Black students are more active and influential in group interaction. What a new finding is that these organizational characteristics result in White children viewing Black children as more influential. It is legitimate for the minority group to speak up and sometimes tell Whites what to do. We think that the organizational variables determine how the races view each other. This, in turn, influences the behavior of all Black children as they interact with Whites. It is usually assumed that children treat each other like children and are not aware of racial dynamics--we do not think this is at all the case. The standing of the minority group in the official apparatus of the school does indeed come to affect peer relations and the behavior of the individual.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have documented the effects of reading status on behavior in your classrooms. We have argued that unless this status order is modified you will have a difficult time in improving the performance of your weakest students. We have also argued that as long as the High Readers are also more likely to be White, your classrooms are unlikely to be places where stereotyped ideas about the competence of racial groups are changed.

What can a teacher do about this problem if she/he is convinced that it is an important one? We have found that in many of your classrooms there is a strong "natural" treatment at work, which produces perceptions of competence of those children who are socially influential, even though they may be of minority racial status and have poor skills in reading. As a result, we see much "equal status" interaction capable of producing true racial integration when these children are involved. This sense of competence arising from social interaction among the children can be brought to bear on academic skills. However, if the teacher is unaware that socially influential children see themselves and are seen by others as intellectually capable, this effect will not naturally result in academic improvement. The informal social world of the students and the formal academic world of the classroom will continue to function without affecting each other very much.

We have recommended groupwork as especially beneficial to such children. They will participate on an equal status basis and become involved in the intellectual content of the task. They can "hold their own" with students who do much better at academic subjects. They probably see themselves and are seen by others as smart and capable. In the area of basic skills, they should respond to a strong individualized program where they are given challenging but appropriate tasks; they must see that systematic effort and engagement

result in objective success and favorable evaluation. If they receive prompt and realistic feedback on their academic tasks and are not allowed to "slack off," or deceived by unconditional praise, they should respond by increased willingness to work hard and improve in these areas which they do regard as important.

What about the poor readers who are not socially influential? The teacher should think about developing alternative conceptions of ability in these children. Other children need to see them as more capable of making important contributions. By using multiple ability tasks in some areas of the curriculum and by using small group techniques which enforce participation and contribution by each child, these children can come to develop favorable evaluations of themselves on new intellectual abilities. They will also be seen as more capable by peers.

In the basic skills area, it is essential to avoid invidious comparisons which will only aggravate the problems of academic status orders. Marks and grades which allow comparison between individuals on a single dimension should be minimized. However, these students also need prompt and realistic feedback and reinforcement on their academic performance. They need invididualized feedback on how well they are attaining objectives and which particular skills require further work. Teacher's evaluation of students should be a private affair, not overheard by half the class. If students are working on individualized tasks they will not be able to make inappropriate and unfavorable comparisons because they are moving more slowly than other students. They cannot be allowed to withdraw from active effort at improvement in these areas. If the teacher is successful in building a sense of success in important intellectual abilities in the classroom for this child, it should become much easier to persuade him/her to work hard in the basic skills area.

The results of the study tell us that these students will need more than new conceptions of their intellectual abilities. They also will need to play more influential roles in the classroom. The simple and workable role of facilitator in small group discussions can allow such children to play a central and important role in the classroom. Because they do control important features of the group's behavior, they will be seen as more influential. Having them perceived as a leader, should make it much easier for everyone to form the new conceptions of their abilities.